

first surge of civic pride in this period

However, the presence of another prominent figure in Louisville did not go unnoticed. As a matter of fact, it would have been impossible to overlook this figure since he was Jim Porter, the "Kentucky giant" and reputedly the second tallest man in the world at the time he lived.

Porter became the city's first international celebrity. Until he was 17, he was puny and undersized, but overnight he began to take on weight and height at a phenomenal rate. Some asserted he grew as much as an inch a week.

After several weeks of this abnormal heightening, an enterprising Portland-area neighbor of Porter began to roam about the city, taking bets on how much he would grow the next week. On Saturday nights Porter would be weighed and measured in the presence of the frontier "bookie" and his patrons and all wagers settled.

Eventually Porter leveled off at 7-feet, 9-inches and more than 300 pounds. His fame spread across the nation after he made a financially successful tour of Eastern states with a company of dwarfs, playing Gulliver in a dramatization of "Gulliver's Travels."

Meanwhile, the first railroad into the city, from Frankfort, finally was completed on December 13, 1851, a continuation of the Frankfort-to-Lexington line, the oldest railroad west of the mountains. The next year, the first rail link with the north, the Jeffersonville Railroad, was put into service.

At the same time, the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, which had been established in 1850, was pushing rails deep into the south.

But all wasn't progress and light during the 1838-1863 period. There also were incidents that stand as dark blots in the history of the city.

One such incident was the "Bloody Monday" riots of August 6, 1855.

The Whig Party, long the dominant political force in Kentucky, had passed out of existence the year before and had been replaced by the Know Nothing Party. The new party thrived on anti-foreign and anti-Catholic propaganda, a hate combination that reached a violent peak on election day, "Bloody Monday," when foreigners were clubbed and stoned and houses were burned in a series of riots. Before the day was over, 22 persons had been killed and property damage ran into thousands of dollars.

There was still more trouble in store for Louisville before this eventful quarter-century was to end.

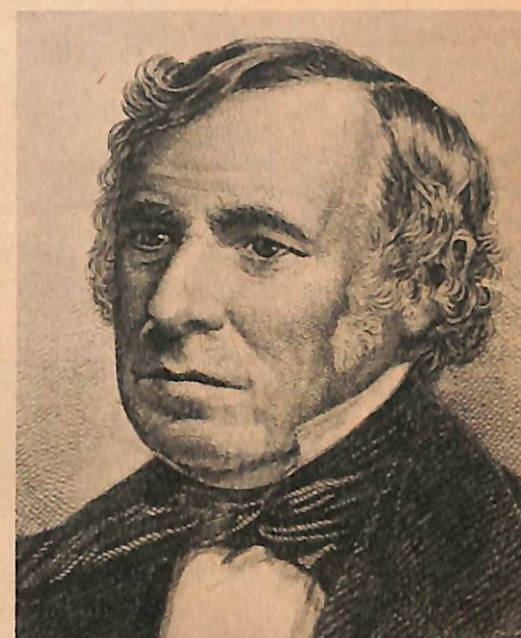
For the black clouds of civil war were gathering ominously on the horizon, and once war came Louisville, like the remainder of Kentucky, would be caught squarely in the middle, torn apart by the issues which divided the nation.

As early as 1841, scattered frays between abolitionists and those favoring slavery had flared up in Louisville. These clashes became more common and secession was more widely talked as circumstances slowly but surely built up to the breaking point of war.

Even churches were split by the burning issues of slavery, secession and states' rights. In May of 1845, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized in Louisville; later Presbyterians also would separate into Northern and Southern groups.

The climax to this nervousness came on April 12, 1861, when Confederates shelled the handful of Federal troops holding Fort Sumter in the harbor at Charleston, S. C.

Significantly, the Union commander whose refusal to surrender Sumter brought on the first shot of the war was a Louisvillian, Major Robert Anderson. His home town was to know more of him in the months that followed.



ZACHARY TAYLOR, who had grown up near Louisville, became President in 1848.

At the time of the Sumter incident, Louisville's population was 69,739, a gain of 53,000 or 340 percent since 1838.

Because of its importance as a transportation hub, Louisville had built up a profitable trade with both warring sections. Goods from the industrial East and foodstuffs from the agricultural midlands funneled into the city to be added to the output of its own plants—pork products, tobacco, hemp, whisky, metal goods, drugs, clothing—for shipment on to market.

At first Louisville, reflecting Kentucky's of-

AND THEN FINALLY CAME THE RAILROADS . . .

At first Louisville had been disenchanted with the idea of railroads, but by the late 1850's rail lines spread out from the city in all directions, adding greatly to its standing as a transportation center. This drawing shows a train south of Louisville.

